

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00337 140305Z
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 OES-07 ACDA-12 TRSE-00
OMB-01 /118 W

-----095866 140652Z /10

R 140225Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9110
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
MEMBASSY PARIS 7817
AMCONSUL UDORN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0337

BANGKOK ALSO PASS UDORN ELECTRICALLY

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PDIP MMOL MARR PDEV LA US PORG
SUBJECT: UNEP PROPOSED PROJECT FOR ORDNANCE CLEARANCE IN
THE PLAIN OF JARS

1. UN OFFICIALS SEPARATELY TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER
MARCH 9 THAT ON MARCH 1 AN OFFICIAL FROM THE UN ENVIRON-
MENT PROGRAM MET WITH LAO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZA-
TIONS, DR. SOMCHIT PHILATHAVONG, TO DISCUSS A POSSIBLE
UNEP PROJECT TO CLEAR UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE IN THE PLAIN
OF JARS. A TENTATIVE PROJECT DESIGN WOULD BE FOR THE
UNEP TO PROVIDE EQUIPMENT AND AN EXPERT TO TRAIN LAO IN
ORDNANCE CLEARANCE AND TO SUPERVISE THE OPERATIONS.

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2 DR. SOMCHIT REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE
PROJECT AND OFFERED TO ARRANGE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH
THE APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN THE NATIONAL PLANNING
COMMITTEE. THE UNEP OFFICIAL WAS LATER TOLD, HOWEVER,
THAT THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OFFICIALS WERE "TOO BUSY"
TO MEET WITH HIM.

3. COMMENT: DURING 1977 THE LPDR SPONSORED SEVERAL DELEGATIONS OF WESTERN AID DONORS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PLAIN OF JARS. THE VISITORS WERE POINTEDLY SHOWED COLLECTIONS OF UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE AND BOMB DEBRIS AND WERE INTRODUCED TO LOCAL FARMERS INJURED BY BOMBLETS WHEN TILLING THEIR LAND. THE LPDR'S USE OF THIS PROPAGANDA EXERCISE MAKES THE UNEP PROPOSED PROJECT POLITICALLY SENSITIVE. WE SUSPECT THAT AN LPDR DECISION ON THIS PROJECT WILL BE MADE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE LAO GOVERNMENT, PERHAPS AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE SOVIETS AND VIETNAMESE. CHAMBERLIN

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Message Attributes

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